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## **BAUCUS WILL NOT MOVE FREE TRADE PACTS IN SENATE BEFORE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE OVERHAUL**

*Senate Finance Chairman insists on law for American workers before FTAs, says bipartisan cooperation will be necessary to advance trade agenda this year*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) said today that he will not support or move through the Senate any pending free trade agreement until a new Trade Adjustment Assistance law is in place for America's workers. In a major address at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, the head of the Senate panel with jurisdiction over U.S. trade policy said that he intends to advance legislation reauthorizing and improving the TAA program in the next few weeks, and that the program's successful renewal and expansion must precede congressional votes on planned pacts with Colombia, Panama, and Korea. Trade Adjustment Assistance supports workers, firms, and farmers if they are affected negatively by global growth of the American economy. Baucus has proposed a major overhaul of TAA to cover American service workers, prevent layoffs, and shore up health care and training options.

**"Our task is to adopt and implement a Trade Adjustment Assistance program that reflects the 21st century global economy,"** said Baucus at today's luncheon speech. **"Let me be very clear. This task, and no other, must be our nation's trade policy priority. Until we accomplish it, other issues on today's trade agenda must take the back seat. That includes congressional consideration of pending free trade agreements with Colombia, Korea, and Panama. I simply cannot support, or consider moving these agreements in the Senate, until we realize the goal of expanded and reauthorized Trade Adjustment Assistance."**

For the full text of Baucus's speech, including details on his proposed TAA overhaul, visit the following Finance Committee URL: <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/baucus.htm>. The Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance Act he introduced with Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) in 2007 extends current TAA programs for five years, redesigning benefits to be more flexible and accessible. In addition to expanding eligibility to the 80 percent of American workers in services industries, the bill creates new opportunities for workers in rural and distressed communities, and makes benefits available to workers affected by trade with any country. The goal, Baucus said, is to help workers get and keep good-paying jobs here at home.

**"We have the opportunity to make sure that Trade Adjustment Assistance matches the ambition and flexibility of our workers,"** said Baucus. **"We have the chance to reform Trade Adjustment Assistance in a way that recognizes our workers' potential and anticipates their needs. We have the obligation to enhance what works in TAA and to change what doesn't."**

Baucus has noted that pending free trade agreements come with outstanding concerns. Panama's National Assembly is currently led by Pedro Miguel Gonzalez, suspected of murdering a U.S. serviceman. Concerns remain about whether Colombia has made sufficient improvements in the apprehension and prosecution of persons responsible for the killing of labor leaders. Korea continues to maintain an unscientific ban on U.S. beef products, contrary to World Animal Health Organization guidelines. Baucus, from the ranching state of Montana, has repeatedly notified Korean officials that the U.S.-Korea pact will remain stalled until Korea lifts its unfair beef ban.